A House or a Home

from the talk “Dedication Day,” by President Thomas S. Monson, October 2000 General Conference

“When the seas of life are stormy, a wise mariner seeks a port of peace. The family, as we have traditionally known it, is such a refuge of safety. ‘The home is the basis of a righteous life and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions.’ Actually, a home is much more than a house. A house is built of lumber, brick, and stone. A home is made of love, sacrifice, and respect. A house can be a home, and a home can be a heaven when it shelters a family. When true values and basic virtues undergird the families of society, hope will conquer despair, and faith will triumph over doubt.

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‘Do we exemplify the legacy of love? Do our homes? Bernadine Healy, in a commencement address, gave this counsel: ‘As a physician, who has been deeply privileged to share the most profound moments of people’s lives including their final moments, let me tell you a secret. People facing death don’t think about what degrees they have earned, what positions they have held, or how much wealth they have accumulated. At the end, what really matters is who you loved and who loved you. That circle of love is everything, and is a great measure of a past life. It is the gift of greatest worth.’

“Our Lord and Savior’s message was one of love. It can be as a light to our personal pathway to exaltation.

“Near the end of his life, one father looked back on how he had spent his time on earth. An acclaimed, respected author of numerous scholarly works, he said, ‘I wish I had written one less book and taken my children fishing more often.’

“Time passes quickly. Many parents say that it seems like yesterday that their children were born. Now those children are grown, perhaps with children of their own. ‘Where did the years go?’ they ask. We cannot call back time that is past, we cannot stop time that now is, and we cannot experience the future in our present state. Time is a gift, a treasure not to be put aside for the future but to be used wisely in the present.

“Have we cultivated a spirit of love in our homes? Observed President David O. McKay, ‘A true Mormon home is one in which if Christ should chance to enter, he would be pleased to linger and to rest.’

“What are we doing to ensure that our homes meet this description? Do we ourselves meet it?”